

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 CU-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1506

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 18984

NESCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AORG, UNESCO

SUBJECT: CONTON VISIT ISRAEL - EDUCATION IN OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES

REF: (A) PARIS 17561, (B) PARIS 18135

1. CONTON IS STILL OUT OF PARIS, HOWEVER, PERMREP HAD
CONVERSATION WITH DDG FOBES RE VISIT OF CONTON JERUSALEM
WITH DIRECTOR DEPT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE GERALD BOLLA.
ACCORDING TO FOBES CONTON IS MUCH ILL AT EASE FOLLOWING
HIS DISCUSSIONS IN JERUSALEM. REPORTEDLY THE ISRAELIS
IGNORED THE LETTER FROM UNESCO REQUESTING INFORMATION ON
THE STATUS OF EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND
REFUSED TO FURNISH ANY. FOBES SAID IT IS CLEAR THAT
ISRAEL WILL REFUSE TO GIVE ANY RECOGNITION TO THE GEN-
ERAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTION WHICH IT CONSIDERS IMPRACTICAL
AND UNREASONABLE AND INTERFERING WITH ITS RIGHTS OF
ADMINISTRATION. CONTON IS, ACCORDING TO FOBES, UNCER-
TAIN HOW TO REPORT TO DG M'BOW, AND WHETHER THE DG WILL
WANT TO STATE PUBLICLY THAT ISRAEL HAS DECLINED TO RES-
POND TO THE UNESCO REQUEST TO FURNISH INFORMATION
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ON THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

2. OTHER THAN ON THE SPOT FACT FINDING IT IS CLEAR THAT CONTON'S VISIT DID NOT ACCOMPLISH MUCH.

3. AS TO THE ITEM ON THE SEPTEMBER EXBD AGENDA, FOBES EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SINCE SO LITTLE HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY WAY OF FACT FINDING THE DG WOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION TO GIVE A FULL REPORT TO THE BOARD. THEREFORE, HE MIGHT ONLY STATE THAT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ARE CONTINUING AND THAT SOME OF THE INTERESTED PARTIES HAVE NOT RESPONDED. AS OF THIS DATE, FOBES SAID, SOME OF THE ARAB STATES HAVE NOT REPLIED TO THE UNESCO LETTER AND THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE FROM THE PLO.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ISSUE BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER BOARD. THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE FOR DG M'BOW TO SIMPLY NOTE THAT EFFORTS ARE CONTINUING AND PROPOSE NO ACTION BY THE BOARD. HOWEVER, THE SEEDS OF TROUBLE ARE PRESENT AND CAN GET OUT OF HAND IF CONDEMNATORY RESOLUTIONS ARE INTRODUCED OR IF THE ARABS FEEL THEY HAVE TO MAKE A RECORD WITH THE USUAL SPEECHES AGAINST ISRAEL. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ISRAELIS SEEM TO BE TAKING A TOUGH LINE ON THIS ISSUE AND IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR M'BOW TO KEEP THE LID ON. FOBES WILL RECOMMEND THAT THE ISSUE BE KEPT DOWN AND UNDER CONTROL AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY WYNTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD WILL USE HIS INFLUENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY. HOWEVER, IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE A JUDGMENT AS TO WHAT WILL LIKELY TRANSPIRE. A CONTINUING DIALOGUE BETWEEN UNESCO AND ISRAEL WOULD CERTAINLY BE HELPFUL.
GAMMON

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